



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC STATEMENT ON JUSTICE DEPARTMENT DAVIS-BESSE ACTION

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) appreciates the attention that the U.S. Attorney's office has devoted to this issue which culminated today with the actions announced by the Justice Department. Central to this matter was a failure by the licensee to ensure that information provided to the NRC was complete so it can effectively regulate nuclear power plant safety.

The NRC took tough, aggressive action against FirstEnergy, levying the largest fine in NRC history (\$5.45 million) for violations associated with the damage to the reactor vessel head at Davis-Besse and for deliberately providing inaccurate and incomplete information to the NRC on reactor conditions. Action also has been initiated against five individuals.

The Davis-Besse actions by the NRC, and DOJ and its Environmental Crimes Section, send a strong message to the industry, emphasizing that appropriate safety margins must be maintained and that the NRC will not tolerate the failure of licensees and individuals to provide it with accurate and complete information.

The failure to comply with NRC regulations and provide accurate information led to a two-year shutdown of the Davis-Besse plant for extensive repairs, major management changes, and improvements to the safety culture of the plant staff. Only after extensive inspections and oversight did the agency permit the plant to restart in March 2004. Since that time, the plant has operated safely and successfully.

The NRC also instituted a "lessons learned" task force following the event to evaluate the agency's regulatory processes on reactor vessel head integrity and recommend improvements for both the NRC and industry. All of the nearly 50 task force recommendations have been implemented.

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